

American

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Strong Japan-U.S. Ties Benefit World, President Obama Says

By Jane Morse | Staff Writer | 24 April 2014

Washington — “A strong U.S.-Japan relationship is not only good for our countries but good for the world,” says President Obama.

In remarks to reporters before his April 24 meeting with Japan's prime minister, Shinzo Abe, Obama said U.S.-Japan “shared democratic values mean that we have to work together in multilateral settings to deal with regional hot spots around the globe, but also to try to make sure that we are creating a strong set of rules that govern the international order.”

“And the strong people-to-people bonds that we have and the educational and scientific and cultural exchanges that we have mean that our friendship and alliance, I'm confident, will continue for generations to come,” the president said.

Obama is in Japan April 23–25 on a state visit to discuss the modernization of the U.S.-Japan security alliance as well as economic and commercial ties between the two countries. Japan is his first stop on a trip through East Asia that will also take him to the Republic of Korea, Malaysia and the Philippines.

During a joint press conference April 24 with Abe, Obama said: “America's security and prosperity is inseparable from the future of [the Asia-Pacific] region, and that's why I've made it a priority to renew American leadership in the Asia-Pacific. And the cornerstone of our strategy — and the foundation of the region's security and economic progress — is our historic treaty alliances, including with Japan.”

Obama said the United States and Japan agree “to continue deepening our security cooperation. ... As we modernize our defense posture in the region, our forces in Japan will include our most advanced military capabilities.”

The president added that the United States and Japan “stand together in calling for disputes in the region, including maritime issues, to be resolved peacefully through dialogue. We share a commitment to fundamental principles such as freedom of navigation and respect for international law.”

Regarding commercial ties between the two countries, Obama acknowledged that “there are certain sectors of the Japanese economy — agricultural sectors, the auto sector — in which market access has been restricted historically, certainly compared to the market access that

Japan has had to U.S. consumers.” But the president praised Abe for having recognized that “if, in fact, Japan wanted to push forward in this new century, then reforms were going to have to take place. And he has initiated a number of those reforms.”

Current trade talks between the United States and Japan are of “strategic importance,” Obama said, because they are “shaping the economic environment for the fastest-growing region in the world, not just for this year or next year, but potentially for this decade and the next decade.”

“And what rules apply — whether we are operating in a fair and transparent way, whether intellectual property is respected, whether markets are freely accessible, whether, in fact, countries are able to increase trade, and as a consequence increase jobs and prosperity for their people — a lot of that is going to depend on choices and decisions that we make right now,” Obama said.

Economic security, the president added, also depends on energy security. “We're going to keep working together on clean and efficient alternatives to fossil fuels both at home and abroad that can power the global economy while combating climate change,” he said.

Key Forms of Intellectual Property Protection

24 April 2014

(This is adapted from an article by Thomas G. Field Jr. that appeared in the U.S. Department of State publication Focus on Intellectual Property Rights.)

Intellectual property is a valuable asset for an entrepreneur. It consists of inventions, literary and artistic works, symbols, images, names, designs used in commerce and original expressions of creative individuals.

The key forms of intellectual property protection are patents, copyrights, trademarks and trade secrets. Because intellectual property shares many of the characteristics of real and personal property, associated rights permit intellectual property to be treated as an asset that can be bought, sold, licensed or given away. Intellectual property laws enable owners, inventors and creators to protect their property from unauthorized use.

Inventors, artists and authors — whose work is intangible — face difficulty in earning a living if their claim to their creations is not respected. Unable to rely on locks and fences to protect their work, they turn to intellectual property protection laws.

WHY DO COUNTRIES PROTECT INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY?

Countries know that safeguarding intellectual property

rights fosters economic growth, provides incentives for technological innovation, and attracts investment that will create jobs and opportunities for all their citizens.

Intellectual property protections are also critical to consumers. Most advances in transportation, agriculture and health care would not exist without strong intellectual property support.

COPYRIGHT

Copyrights offer essentially the only protection for music, films, written works of fiction, poems, architectural designs and other works of cultural value. The owner of copyrighted material has exclusive rights to reproduce the work, prepare derivative works, distribute copies of the work, and perform or display the work. As creators develop new forms of expression, these protected categories expand. Intellectual property now includes such works as computer programs and sound recordings.

For works created after January 1, 1978, copyright protection generally lasts for the life of the author plus 70 years. For an anonymous work, a pseudonymous work or a work made for hire, the copyright endures for a term of 95 years from the year of its first publication or a term of 120 years from the year of its creation, whichever expires first. Only an author or someone deriving their rights through the author, like a publisher, can claim copyright.

PATENTS

A patent gives the inventor the exclusive right to prevent others from making, using or selling a similar product for a fixed period of time – 20 years in most countries.

Patent applicants must negotiate a defensible claim. Because patent claims are as varied as the technologies they protect, applicants must set boundaries of what their invention consists of and what in the invention can be protected from infringement.

To avoid protecting technology that is already available or within easy reach, claims are examined by experts.

TRADE SECRETS

Any information that may be used in the operation of a business and is sufficiently valuable to give actual or potential economic advantage is considered a trade secret. Examples are recipes for popular food products, customer mailing lists, advertising strategies and distribution processes.

Trade secrets are usually protected by contracts and nondisclosure agreements. Trade secrets are valid only if the information has not been revealed.

TRADEMARKS

Trademarks are commercial source indicators, distinctive

symbols, words or designs that identify certain goods or services produced or provided by a specific person or enterprise. Trademarks are especially important when consumers and producers are in different locations. Consumers need trademarks to seek or avoid the goods and services of particular firms.

In most countries, trademarks must be registered to be enforceable and renewed to remain in force.

GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS

Geographical indications identify a good as having a certain quality, reputation or other characteristic attributed to its location of origin. Geographic indications are treated as a subset of trademarks used to prevent consumer confusion.

OTHER FORMS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

In some countries, certain well-known people can license or forbid the fraudulent use of their names or likenesses for commercial use.

Some countries also protect the ornamental or aesthetic aspects of goods.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY PROTECTION

When patents are not available, technology is held back. If inventors had to rely on secrecy to protect their inventions, much important but undisclosed information would never be known by others.

Although effective intellectual property enforcement is important economically, it also promotes common goals. For instance, by enforcing the property rights of pharmaceutical companies, the companies are able to recoup some of their investments in the development of one drug and use those funds to develop other drugs that can be used against other health risks.

Besides encouraging the creation of new technologies, patent and trademark laws are useful to prevent harm posed by counterfeit goods and by falsely labeled medical and food products.

Local cultures also are at stake when works by local artists, authors and musicians are displaced by the illegal sale of pirated music, films and handicrafts.

U.S. Businesses Increasingly Rely on Renewable Energy Sources

23 April 2014

Washington — U.S. businesses and educational institutions continue their push to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by increasing use of renewable energy sources.

On April 23, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Green Power Partnership updated its list of the top 100 organizations that are choosing to use electricity from clean, renewable sources like wind and solar power.

"By using green power, these companies and organizations are showing that business can flourish while taking meaningful steps to reduce carbon pollution," said EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy. "Making cleaner choices to power our communities, institutions and businesses reduces the pollution that contributes to climate change, protects America's health and environment, and supports continued growth in the green power sector."

Intel Corporation continued its seven-year run as the United States' largest voluntary user of green power, meeting 100 percent of its electricity load with renewable resources.

Other technology companies in EPA's top 10 include Microsoft Corporation, Google Inc. and Apple Inc. Apple increased its annual green power use by nearly 100 million kilowatt-hours (kWh), moving from Number 11 to Number 8 on the list.

In total, the combined green power use of these top 100 partners amounts to nearly 24 billion kWh annually, which represents close to 83 percent of the green power commitments made by all participants in the program. The list is calculated based on annual green power use (in kilowatt-hours).

The top 10 partners on the list are Intel Corporation, Kohl's Department Stores, Microsoft Corporation, Whole Foods Market, Google Inc., Wal-Mart Stores Inc., Staples, Apple Inc., the city of Houston and the U.S. Department of Energy.

In addition, for the eighth year in a row, EPA is encouraging increased green power use among higher education institutions through the College and University Green Power Challenge.

Of the 33 competing conferences, the Big 10 is the 2014 conference champion, collectively using more than 309 million kWh of green power annually and avoiding carbon pollution equal to that produced by the electricity use of more than 30,000 American homes.

During this academic year, the Big 10 includes the University of Illinois, University of Indiana, the University of Iowa, the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, the University of Minnesota, the University of Nebraska, Northwestern University, Ohio State University, Penn State University, Purdue University and the University of Wisconsin.

The University of Pennsylvania continues to be the top individual school in the challenge for the seventh year in a row, purchasing more than 200 million kWh of wind power annually — more green power than any of the 78 other competing schools.

EPA also recently announced that, in support of President Obama's Climate Action Plan, the Green Power Partnership is launching the On-site Renewables Challenge, with a goal to double the use of on-site green power by partners by the end of the decade. As part of the challenge, EPA invites partners to increase the amount of energy they produce and use from on-site renewables by the end of the decade.

Green power is a subset of renewable energy and represents the renewable energy resources and technologies that provide the highest environmental benefit. EPA defines green power as electricity produced from solar, wind, geothermal, biogas, eligible biomass and low-impact small hydroelectric sources.

As part of the EPA's Green Power Partnership, more than 1,200 organizations are purchasing more than 28 billion kilowatt-hours of green power annually, avoiding an amount of carbon pollution equal to that created by the electricity use of more than 2.4 million American homes.

The partnership provides quarterly updated lists of partners using green power in the following categories: retail, technology and telecommunications, local government, and K-12 schools, among others.

Mine Removal Programs in Cambodia Help Make Communities Safer

23 April 2014

This blog post by Stan Brown appeared on the State Department's blog website on April 23. Brown serves as the director of the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs.

Cooperative Clearance Efforts Help Make Cambodian Communities Safer

By Stan Brown

In 2011, as President Obama announced the strategic rebalance of U.S. foreign policy priorities to the Asia-Pacific region, Cambodia was nearing its third decade since the end of armed conflict. Landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) dating back to the Vietnam War era and the Khmer Rouge years remain a deadly legacy in communities across the country. I recently completed my first international trip as director of PM/WRA to visit U.S.-funded demining programs in Cambodia, where I saw firsthand how we are making slow but steady progress to help address this difficult

humanitarian challenge.

During the various Indochina wars, the Khmer Rouge, the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces, the Vietnamese military, and to a lesser extent the Thai army, were responsible for laying extensive minefields. These minefields are concentrated in the western part of the country, notably in the dense K-5 mine belt laid in the 1980s along Cambodia's border with Thailand as protection against the Khmer Rouge. The eastern and northeastern areas of Cambodia are heavily contaminated with UXO, mostly from U.S. air and artillery strikes during the Vietnam War and also from numerous battles fought along the border with Vietnam. Cambodia has an estimated 124 mine-affected districts and approximately 1,914 square kilometers littered with landmines and other explosive remnants of war. Between Fiscal Years 1993 and 2013, the U.S. invested \$90.5 million in Cambodia for humanitarian mine action.

I began my visit with several stops in provinces along the Thailand-Cambodia border, including Otdar Meanchey, Banteay Meanchey, and Battambang, where I saw how great the need is for safe, cleared land for agricultural use. The Cambodian population is rapidly growing as the country rebuilds its infrastructure. As I visited with U.S.-funded implementing partners in these provinces, the impact of our efforts to make this land safe for communities became readily apparent to me.

In Otdar Meanchey, I met with the HALO Trust, one of our NGO partners on the ground. HALO has been active in Cambodia for more than 20 years. HALO's Operations Manager for the region is a Cambodian national named Leng Saren, who has been with HALO Cambodia almost since the program's inception, and we discussed the evolution of humanitarian mine action programs in the country. The professionalism and dedication of the HALO staff who work tirelessly to clear the northwest provinces along the infamous K-5 mine belt is clearly evident.

HALO staff also showed us an anti-vehicle minefield in Otdar Meanchey, where the Khmer Rouge maintained a stronghold up until the 1990s. We learned how HALO used equipment such as large loop detectors to clear large areas contaminated with anti-vehicle mines. During our visit, a monk from a nearby commune stopped by to thank our group for working to clear the land of mines, and HALO also received a request for explosive ordnance disposal when a group of children found a pile of mortars.

In 2008, clearance in many rural communities along the Thailand-Cambodia border was suspended as a result of ongoing disputes between the two countries over the Preah Vihear temple, a UNESCO World Heritage site, in northern Cambodia. Late last year, following the UN's

International Court of Justice decision that the disputed territory belonged to Cambodia; tensions eased and HALO re-initiated clearance of explosive remnants of war in some of these border areas.

As in many post-conflict countries, landmines and UXO have a particularly serious impact on rural communities, where they are not only an immediate safety hazard, but also keep farmers from their fields and from transporting goods to and from markets. I met with the leader of one of these villages, who told me that his community has grown from a mere 50 members to 1,200 during his tenure, underscoring the urgency of clearance projects in the area. He asked for assistance in clearing additional water sources so that his village could safely access drinking water, highlighting the importance of continued U.S. support for clearing landmines and UXO.

In Kampong Chhnang, I visited another of our NGO partners, the Golden West Humanitarian Foundation, where I learned about their Explosive Harvesting Program. This unique program recycles the explosives contained in stockpiled ammunition into specially designed explosive charges used to help safely dispose of landmines or UXO. Golden West produces about 3,000 of these charges a month, saving demining NGOs and Cambodian Mine Authorities approximately \$500,000 a year. Another U.S. supported Golden West initiative involves using advanced 3-D printing technology to create detailed training models of landmines and military ordnance, for use by demining technicians working to safely clear explosive remnants of war.

We also called on the new Cambodian Mine Action Center (CMAC) Salvage Dive Unit operational headquarters. Under this program, developed in partnership with Golden West, Cambodian deminers are training to become their country's first Salvage Dive Team responsible for underwater UXO clearance.

Cambodia's efforts to address explosive remnants of war contamination are more efficient and capable because of funding from the U.S. government. We remain committed to supporting this work in the future and to working closely with the variety of NGO partners and Cambodian authorities to help Cambodian communities.

Since 1993, the United States has contributed more than \$2.2 billion to more than 90 countries around the world to reduce the harmful worldwide effects of at-risk, illicitly proliferated, and indiscriminately used conventional weapons of war. For more information on U.S. humanitarian demining and Conventional Weapons Destruction programs, check out the latest edition of our *To Walk the Earth in Safety*.

Peace Corps Volunteers Work to Make Every Day Earth Day

23 April 2014

Washington — On Earth Day and every day, Peace Corps volunteers lead grass-roots efforts to protect and preserve the environment in the countries in which they serve, the Peace Corps said in an April 22 press release.

Volunteers promote reforestation, build fuel-efficient cookstoves, enhance food security and institute environmental education programs. By strengthening awareness and understanding of environmental issues, volunteers share knowledge that empowers their communities to develop their own programs and make their own choices about how to best protect and preserve the local environment, the Peace Corps said.

About 17 percent of Peace Corps volunteers focus on environment and agriculture projects, while many others incorporate environmental protection into their classroom activities and secondary projects.

CAMEROON

In Cameroon, Peace Corps volunteer Rachel Warner of Waukesha, Wisconsin, is planting 2,000 trees at a local school with her community. The trees will provide shade for the students, who are often outside exposed to the sun and heat, and also revitalize the land.

"The soil will be enhanced by the trees and will help in the fight against desertification," Warner said. "Students will also learn about these subjects during our environmental club meetings, which will take place before the planting."

A portion of the funds for Warner's project is being raised through the Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP), which supports Peace Corps volunteer community projects worldwide. A local tree nursery will donate 1,000 trees, and community members will help plant the trees and lead a free training session on tree planting to contribute to the project. The PCPP grant will also supply bags and poles for proper protective care that will allow the trees to survive the dry season. To maintain the newly planted trees, students at the school will implement a tree-watering plan.

CHINA

In China, Peace Corps volunteers Sam Patwell of Philadelphia; John Guen-Murray of Chicago; Daniel Schoolenberg of Grand Rapids, Michigan; and Angelina Loverde of Burke, Virginia, are planning the Fifth Annual Eco Leadership Camp coordinated by Peace Corps volunteers. The camp is a five-day summer camp held at

an organic farm designed to teach students about the environment, local ecology and sustainable agriculture.

Future leaders and educators from diverse backgrounds will learn how environmental issues affect their communities and how to promote environmental awareness, all while improving their English skills.

"The students attending the camp are all English students," Loverde said. "They will be immersed in an English-speaking environment that will feel safer, more intimate and more natural than the classroom."

A portion of the camp's funding is being raised through the PCPP, and community donations are providing for student transportation, food and lodging.

PERU

In Peru, Peace Corps volunteer Natalie Lake of Minneapolis is installing wind turbines with her community at local schools to educate students about renewable energy and deliver electricity to the schools.

Lake has installed one 500-watt turbine at the largest secondary school and four smaller turbines at four additional schools. The large turbine will provide 560 students and 30 professors with electricity that will power the school during the day and allow for security lights at night. The small turbines are serving as climate change education tools by showing how the wind's kinetic energy is converted into electrical energy.

"We knew the project would benefit the school economically, but it will also serve as an invaluable educational tool," Lake said. "My community partners and I organized an interactive workshop on wind energy for the students to attend. The results of the workshop showed that the students were able to grasp complicated concepts, which were demonstrated during presentations they later gave to their teachers, parents and community leaders."

The turbines were partially funded by a \$1 million U.S. Department of State grant in support of the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas. The grant funds Peace Corps volunteer efforts that increase rural access to energy, mitigate the effects of climate change and promote the use of renewable energy and energy efficient technologies in Central and South American communities. Other projects funded include the installation of solar panels, fuel efficient cookstoves and biodigesters.

Lake's project has inspired a nearby university to install four additional large turbines in the area.

President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps in 1961 to foster a better understanding among Americans and people of other countries. Since then, more than 215,000 Americans of all ages have served in 139 countries worldwide.

Can We End Global Hunger?

By Kathryn McConnell | Staff Writer | 22 April 2014

Washington — Hunger and undernutrition are costly in human terms and economically. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, hunger and undernutrition cost the world more than \$2 trillion a year in lost productivity.

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in presenting its 2013 Global Food Policy Report posed this question: “Can we really end global hunger and undernutrition by 2025?”

In its report, presented in March in Washington, IFPRI states that some countries are doing their part. They are scaling up nutrition programs and enacting national food-security legislation. “There is momentum and hope for global success,” an IFPRI representative states in a video on its website.

IFPRI, a nongovernmental research group and a partner of the U.S. government, says that to end hunger by 2025, country leaders will need to use a range of tools, including environmentally sustainable farming practices, strong social safety nets, investment in agricultural research, and use of information and communication technologies like mobile phones.

Progress also will require concerted actions among national governments, donors, civil society and the private sector, the IFPRI representative says.

“When countries take the lead in setting strategies and investments, policies are more likely to be effective, sustainable and well-adapted to the local context,” she says. The narrator points out that leaders can learn about what strategies work best before they scale up policies and programs.

In the report, IFPRI also says that leaders should share their knowledge about what works with leaders in other countries and that they should collaborate with international organizations to collect timely and reliable data. Finally, it states that the private sector can play a larger role in finding sustainable solutions for eliminating hunger and undernutrition.

Above, Elijah Muremi of a youth farmers group in Majembeni, Kenya, harvests maize. The group’s profits have enabled the members to open a tailoring business

and expand into tomato farming. The young farmers are now better able to support their families.

U.S. Increases Financial Support for Ukraine

By Jane Morse | Staff Writer | 22 April 2014

Washington — The Obama administration announced a new package of assistance totaling \$50 million to help Ukraine pursue political and economic reform and strengthen the partnership between the United States and Ukraine.

A fact sheet released by the White House April 22 said that U.S. support for Ukraine is “an urgent priority as the Ukrainian government works to establish security and stability, pursue democratic elections and constitutional reform, revive its economy, and ensure government institutions are transparent and accountable to the Ukrainian people.”

Acknowledging Ukraine’s “severe challenges to its sovereignty and territorial integrity,” the White House fact sheet continued: “The United States is committed to ensuring that Ukrainians alone are able to determine their country’s future without intimidation or coercion from outside forces.”

Vice President Biden visited Ukraine April 21–22, in what is the highest-level visit of a U.S. official since the crisis erupted. During his visit, Biden met with Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Rada Speaker and acting President Oleksander Turchynov and key legislators representing different political parties and regions within the Rada. Discussions focused on the international community’s efforts to help stabilize and strengthen Ukraine’s economy and to assist Ukraine in moving forward on constitutional reform, decentralization, anti-corruption efforts, and free and fair presidential elections on May 25.

“The United States supports the rights, the freedoms and the fundamental dignity of the people of Ukraine, all the people of Ukraine,” Biden told Ukrainian legislators April 22.

The United States, Biden said, supports a “united, prosperous and coherent Ukraine.” He added: “To the extent that we can help in stabilizing and strengthening Ukraine’s economy by helping you withstand the unfair economic pressure being thrust upon you, we stand ready to do that, and I say the American people stand ready — not just Barack Obama and Joe Biden — but the American people.”

Biden encouraged the legislators to grasp “the opportunity to generate a united Ukraine.” He added the observation that “there is a much greater desire to call oneself a Ukrainian than to call oneself anything else. And

that's a major, major, major unifying power, no matter how different the traditions are."

Strengthening Nuclear Security Sustainability

21 April 2014

This blog post by Bonnie Jenkins was originally published on the State Department website and appeared on the Harvard University Belfer Center's Nuclear Security Matters blog on April 21. Jenkins serves as the coordinator for threat reduction programs in the State Department's Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation.

Strengthening Nuclear Security Sustainability

By Bonnie Jenkins

Since the 2010 Nuclear Security Summit, Centers of Excellence have been recognized as an important part of the global nuclear security architecture. Centers of Excellence serve as a mechanism for ensuring individuals, whether facility managers, regulatory staff, scientists, engineers, or technicians, are trained on a wide number of important nuclear security issues. These centers focus on the important "human factor" of the global effort to secure nuclear material.

The importance of these centers is highlighted in the Nuclear Security Summit (Summit) communiqués and work plan. Several country participants at past Summits have highlighted their intention to establish a center of excellence or training center. A few have done so since that time, while other centers are still in progress. As a result of the increased attention to training and the human factor in nuclear security, the number of centers of excellence and training centers around the globe has increased, as has the global cadre of trained individuals in nuclear security. These centers can promote a regional, not just national, approach to nuclear security training.

The promotion of centers of excellence and training centers has also been strongly supported through "gift baskets," or joint commitments by a subset of Summit participants, at the last two Summits. At the 2014 Summit, Italy took the lead in a gift basket titled, "Nuclear Security Training and Support Centers/Centers of Excellence." The COE Gift Basket, endorsed by over 30 Summit participants, describes progress achieved since the 2012 Summit, and promotes the development of additional centers and deepening cooperation through the NSSC Network. This number of supporters of the gift basket was an increase from the 24 Summit participants that supported the gift basket in 2012.

In an effort to strengthen the coordination of the increasing number of centers of excellence and training centers, in 2012 the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) established a Nuclear Security Training and

Support Center (NSSC) Network. This network, currently consisting of 108 members from 43 countries, promotes coordination, collaboration, and best practices among existing centers and centers under construction. The network is complemented by the IAEA Nuclear Security Education Network (INSEN), which is focused on the promotion of education in nuclear security at universities. INSEN has over 90 members from 38 countries. Both the NSSC and INSEN work towards the sustained development of educated and trained nuclear security personnel.

Gathering on the sidelines at the NSSC meetings, China, the Republic of Korea, and Japan have recently established an Asia Regional Network to promote coordination and collaboration among their training centers. Their goals are to share information about trainings, share good practices, and share resources. Through the NSSC Network, more such regional sub-groups can be established. As noted by participants in the Asia Network, these regional sub-groups can serve to help develop expertise across a broader range of topics, collaborate efficiently, identify gaps, better understand the needs of other centers in the region, and optimize the use of resources by avoiding duplication of effort.

As we move forward, strengthening the global nuclear security architecture to sustain the important efforts of the Summits is vital. Strengthening nuclear security sustainability and fostering an enduring nuclear security culture requires all individuals involved with nuclear matters on a daily basis be cognizant and appreciative of nuclear security, including by promoting its importance to peers and colleagues. Centers of excellence and training centers, which promote expertise in nuclear security, will remain an essential part of that effort.

Secretary Kerry: Working with the Vatican Against Modern Slavery

20 April 2014

This article by Secretary of State Kerry was first published in the online version of the Boston Globe on April 20. There are no republication restrictions.

Working with the Vatican Against Modern Slavery

By John Kerry, Secretary of State

Last month, I traveled to Rome with President Obama, where I was honored to meet His Holiness Pope Francis. As an altar boy six decades ago, I never imagined that I would find myself crossing the threshold of the Vatican to see the Bishop of Rome.

My wife Teresa and I took our own pilgrimage three years ago at Easter to Assisi, and traveled to Porziuncula to see the chapel which St. Francis restored out of the rubble,

one of his own special ways of acting upon the prophecy visited upon him to “repair My house.” Two years later, Teresa and I sat in Mass at Georgetown as our priest shared the very moving story of the moment Pope Francis decided to take Francis for his name as the Holy Father — after the Cardinal from Brazil shared his caution not to “forget the poor.”

Today, all the world knows that this was more than a symbolic statement by Pope Francis — but the start of a mission that is now an example to the world.

Today, as the first Catholic secretary of state in 33 years, I find special joy and pride in the way that the United States can partner with the Holy See to help meet some of our greatest global challenges.

Among those challenges, we find perhaps no greater threat to human dignity, no greater assault on basic freedom, than the evil of human trafficking — what we call modern-day slavery and what Pope Francis himself denounced as “a crime against humanity.”

Whether it comes in the form of a young girl trapped in a brothel, a woman enslaved as a domestic worker, a boy forced to sell himself on the street, or a man abused on a fishing boat, the victims of this crime have been robbed of the right to lead the lives they choose for themselves.

For years, it’s been apparent that this crime affects every country in the world. As many as 27 million people are victims, and the United States is the first to acknowledge that no government anywhere is doing enough.

But as we dive deeper, we begin to see that modern slavery, like so many other 21st century challenges, doesn’t exist in a vacuum. It’s interconnected with so many of our other foreign-policy concerns, from environmental sustainability to advancing the lives of women and girls to combating transnational organized crime. Wherever we find poverty and lack of opportunity — wherever the rule of law is weak, where corruption is most ingrained, and where populations can’t count on the protection of government and law enforcement — we find not just vulnerability to trafficking, but zones of impunity where traffickers can more easily prey on their victims.

A major zone of impunity is beyond the border and jurisdiction of any single country. Research shows us that people laboring on the high seas are subject to brutal abuse and enslavement. This fact cannot be separated from our other concerns about the ocean: if we want to secure safe and free trade routes, bolster global food security, or curb environmental degradation, we ignore the oceans at our peril.

Trafficking sits at the intersection of all these issues.

Do we think that a ship’s captain who beats and murders his crew will respect his fishing quota? Do we believe he’ll respect laws against smuggling drugs, weapons, and people? Do we think he’s helping conserve the environment for future generations? The answers are self-evident, and so is the need to address this problem head-on.

We are starting to make progress. I’ve instructed the Trafficking in Persons Office at the State Department to zero in on the way modern slavery entangles with economic and environmental concerns. This is one powerful example of how we are engaging with faith communities to solve a range of pressing global issues of mutual concern, in partnership with the new Office of Faith-Based Community Initiatives at the State Department, led by Dr. Shaun Casey whom I recruited from Wesley Seminary.

A key partner in these efforts will be the Apostolate of the Sea, a Catholic organization with a world-wide network of clergy and lay religious serving workers in the fishing fleet and their families. Working together, we feel confident we can improve the way we find modern slavery, identify its victims, get them out of harm’s way, and bring their abusers to justice.

As Christians the world over celebrate Easter, this is a fitting place to fix our gaze. Christ found his earliest followers off the shore of the Sea of Galilee. He brought them off their fishing boats to become his Apostles, to spread his message of love and compassion. Particularly at Easter, this is a message that can guide people of all faiths. When we embrace our common humanity and stand up for the dignity of all people, we realize the vision of a world that is freer and more just a world — free from slavery.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov>)